



EXHIBIT 8
DATE 2-19-07
HB 605

February 18, 2007

TO: Chairman Mendenhall and Members of the House Business Committee

FROM: Sandy Jankowski, volunteer advocate for AARP Montana

RE: **Support of HB 605 Revise laws related to medical assistants**

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Sandy Jankowski and I am a volunteer advocate for AARP Montana. AARP is a non-partisan, non-profit organization with 153,000 members in Montana. I recently retired from St. Peter's Hospital after working as a medical technologist and microbiologist. My work experience also varied from the University of Michigan hospital lab to working in a physician's clinic setting.

Quality of health care and patient safety are important issues for our membership. This bill requires that medical assistants complete a certification program which was not required under current law or regulations. Patients place an enormous amount of trust in the personnel that work in doctor's offices, clinics and hospitals. These patients deserve to know that a minimum amount of certified training has been completed by medical staff. Such training is one way to reduce medical errors and assure a standard of health care quality. Medical errors are far too costly not to require this basic level of training for medical assistants.

Requiring that physicians closely supervise medical assistants and limit the kinds of tasks performed by medical assistants also makes sense in terms of protecting the safety of patients. No doubt, our busy physicians need assistants to help with tasks and make wise use of our health care dollars, but this must be balanced with considerations for quality health care and minimizing medical errors.

I urge your support of HB 605. Thank you.